

Neil Jeffares, *Dictionary of pastellists before 1800*

Online edition

HAMILTON, Gustavus

Co. Meath, Ireland ?1745 – Dublin brd
18.XII.1775

Miniaturist and still-life painter in gouache. He was a younger son of a clergyman (also Gustavus, 1696–1755), rector of Gallow, Co. Meath and his wife, Jane Cathcart. He studied under Robert West at the Dublin School, and was awarded Rev. Samuel Madden's premium of 12*s.* for drawings by under-16 year olds in 1755 (heading the list were Thomas Hickey and Hugh Hamilton); the following year, on 2.XII.1756, he was again awarded a premium (of 10*s.* 6*d.*) for drawing by an under-16, with Hickey, Hugh Hamilton and William Peters also recognised. He was then apprenticed to Samuel Dixon, where he coloured prints of birds and flowers, lodging in Dixon's house in Capel Street, with other pupils, James Reily (*q.v.*) and the actor John O'Keeffe's brother Daniel. Hamilton became a miniaturist, with a fashionable clientèle and a technique notable for his blue-tinted faces. Only one pastel is possibly attributed to him, but the basis for this is unclear; Séé commented in the 1927 catalogue entry for a misattributed pastel (by Sharples), that "Gustave Hamilton should be watched by the judicious collector, as later on more of his work will be unearthed and he is a coming man."

Gustavus Hamilton died at his lodging at Cork Hill (reported in the *Hibernian journal*, 20.XII.1775) and was buried at St Werburgh's (Church of Ireland), Dublin, on 19.XII.1775, aged 30 according to the register (but given as 36 elsewhere; no baptismal record has been found, but O'Keeffe tells us his brother, born 1740, was younger, while the date of 1739 widely quoted, derived from the *Hamilton memoirs*, would stretch the Dublin Society age limit for premiums), which adds the cause of death as "decay".

Bibliography

Bénézit; Paul Caffrey, in *Dictionary of Irish biography*, 2009; Dublin Society council minute book (1750–1757), digitalarchive.rds.ie/files/show/4642; Figgis 2014; Foskett 1987; Grove 1996; Everard Hamilton, *Hamilton memoirs...*, 1920; John O'Keeffe, *Recollections*, 1826; Strickland 1913

Bibliography

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Pastels

J.3744.101 SELF-PORTRAIT, pstl, 54.6x40 (Cecil Harmsworth 1923. Mrs Mallett, St Helena, Finglas, Dublin. London, Christie's South Kensington, 28.IX.2008, Lot 75 repr., attr., est. £600–800). Lit.: *Hamilton memoirs*, repr. opp. p. 22; *Connoisseur*, LXV, 1923, repr. p. 64; Strickland 1913, p. 426, pl. XXIX Φαδν



Young man (Xavier Haas; New York, Anderson, 13–14.I.1927, Lot 111 repr., as by Gustave Hamilton)
[v. Sharples]